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Lake Pleasant center turns on solar system

By Mike McCloy
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With lots of help from Arizona Public Service Co., the Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant is turning sunshine into electricity and education.

APS installed a \$16,000 photovoltaic system at the center for free last week. It produces about enough electricity to power an average home without air-conditioning.

The collectors and meters are on display as part of the center's education program, which attracts about 15,000 people annually.

A phone line will link the system to similar ones at Flagstaff, Prescott, Globe and Peoria. Computer displays will compare electric output under various altitude and cloud conditions.

"The cost to us is nothing," center director Bob Kane said. "It could save us about \$300 a year on our electric bill."

APS solar program manager Cassius McChesney acknowledged that there may be some marketing behind the company's generosity.

"When people look at installing these type of systems on their own home, they'll know how much energy they can get and whether it's cost-effective and affordable," he said. "There is a lot of information out there that is theoretical. We want to provide information that is real."